



BERLIN HIGH SCHOOL

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

139 Patterson Way * Berlin, CT 06037



February 24, 2014

Testimony and Concern regarding:

House Bill 229 – AN ACT CONCERNING SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST PREVENTION

My name is Daniel Scavone and I serve as Director of Athletics for the Berlin Public Schools in Berlin, Connecticut. I am also President-Elect of the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors (CAAD) and a state certified basketball official. I have been an Educator, Coach and Administrator in this state for the past 24 years. In addition to my experiences in education, I had previously worked in the field of Cardiac Rehabilitation as an Exercise Physiologist. So I have a firm understanding of the complexities involved in identifying student athletes with a pre-disposition to Cardiac Disease and the best methods to handle a situation when a sudden cardiac event may take place. I am writing this testimony with concerns over this proposed legislation.

I clearly understand that the intention of this bill is to enhance safety measures for students and youth across the State of Connecticut. While I do advocate for safety through education, I must state that this bill goes well beyond the scope of practicality and cost effectiveness in relation to what is already being done in Connecticut. Currently, we are and have been leaders in providing coaches with a comprehensive and thorough educational program in order to attain and maintain a coaching permit. Some of the curriculum the coaches are exposed to covers the psychological and physiological wellbeing of student athletes, including cardiac risk factors and more importantly the benefits of training the cardiovascular system in an effort to become more physically fit. By increasing cardiovascular fitness a positive by-product is lower risk of developing cardiac disease later in life. Good coaches continuously preach that participating in athletics will help teach healthy lifestyles in the future through physical activity. Besides the educational component, Connecticut requires all coaches to hold current certifications in CPR/FIRST AID. Many schools and training programs also include instruction on how to use AED machines. In my estimation, a bill like this will yield little additional benefits and certainly result in the increased difficulty of attracting and keeping quality coaches.

Looking at this from another standpoint I feel we do all we can to screen student athletes medically before they take the field of play. We require them to have a yearly physical by a medical professional. In this screening a health history is included. In a perfect world it would be nice to offer very expensive tests such as Cardiac Echocardiograms to every perspective athlete in an effort to identify pre-existing cardiac abnormalities. But that would be far too expensive and impractical to medically clear apparently healthy individuals to participate in athletics. There is always going to be a risk when individuals at any age engage in physical activity. I feel confident that we train our coaches and screen our athletes properly. Any additional legislation would be burdensome and not cost effective.

Sincerely,

Daniel Scavone

Daniel Scavone, CMAA